

Series Title: At the Crossroad: From false beliefs to Freedom

Sermon Title: Week 7: The identity trap

Date: 11-17-19

- ***In Matthew 5-7 is one of largest single teachings of Jesus, known as sermon on mount. Starts with Beatitudes “Blessed are...” and no accident that it ends with parable of ‘wise builder’***

Matthew 7:24-27 *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

- ***House is metaphor for our lives. Wise man is the one who hears teaching- the message- of Jesus, and finds this message to be the foundation of their lives- a foundation that survives the storms of life.. a foundation that does not fail.***
- ***CONTINUING ‘CROSSROADS’... started with image of iceberg... getting to the foundation of functional beliefs that define our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. SPECIFICALLY, the common false beliefs that hold us hostage, and the truth that sets us free.***

✠ All of our false beliefs so far- *pain avoidance, the expectation treadmill, trying to meet our own core needs, and our demand for personal justice that leads being judgmental-* all of these are rooted in our foundational human need to create, sustain, and defend our sense of SELF. Put another way, virtually every false belief that holds us hostage has its roots in the matter of IDENTITY.

- ***When Jesus spoke of the wise man who built his LIFE on the foundation of Jesus, we can interpret this as the wise man being one whose IDENTITY was built on the foundation of Jesus.***
- ***Lying at the heart of identity of every person are three questions, even if you don’t consciously answer them.***
 - ***Who do I believe GOD IS... PEOPLE ARE...***
 - ***THE QUESTION- Who do I believe I AM***
- ***Who you believe WHO YOU ARE- your sense of self- is the foundation upon which all else is built. AND our attempts to create and defend our sense of self is the source of all the false beliefs we have discussed.***
- ***As Pete points out- Our sense of self comes down to two questions- WHO AM I, WHAT AM I DOING. Most people to answer the first question with the second...***
 - ***Who I am = What I DO***
- ***If I’m successful, then I AM good. PRIDE. If I fail, then I AM a failure, less than.. fragile!***
 - ***Who I am = What I DID***
- ***Might be past success, or past failure, but very common for my sense of WHO I AM now to be rooted in our past... holding on to, or can’t escape from***
 - ***Who I am = What was DONE to me***
- ***Mostly negative. Fired. Bullied. Sexually assaulted. Often things that happen to us become ingrained in our identity, leading to deep sense of shame, or that I AM worthless, unloveable***
 - ***Who I am = What was SAID to me***
- ***Insulted. Mocked. I’m 53, and at times I still remember, and flinch, at things said to me when I was young. Like above... I AM less than.***
- ***Pete: These all point to the basic formula most use to establish, maintain, protect their identity***

- Who I am = What I do + the AFFIRMATION of others

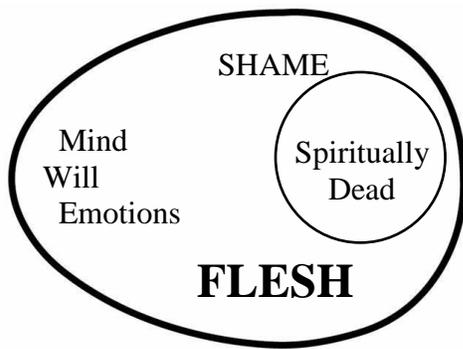
– Of course, this opens us to the trap of performance based acceptance, mask wearing, and **THE most important false belief of entire study, that of course I forgot to put in outline...!!**
FALSE BELIEF #5: MY REAL SELF WILL NEVER BE GOOD ENOUGH

† Reality: **When sense of self is OUR PERFORMANCE and OTHERS ACCEPTANCE**, This source of identity always falls short, leading to one of the most common, most intense, and most private human emotion: SHAME.

- **SHAME is always accompanied by fear of exposure, and so we take these thoughts/beliefs that so profoundly impact our sense of WHO WE ARE, and we bury it deep inside of us to keep it a secret. AND THESE SECRETS POISON US, HOLD US CAPTIVE**
- **HERE'S THE DEAL. No everyone has traumatic past resulting in deep sense of shame (many do), but we ALL have instinct to feel shame- to HIDE and keep secrets- when something happens that negatively impacts our sense of self. PETE "Secrets live in the realm of the enemy, where the darkness provides the illusion of safety... we are as sick as our secrets"**
- **WHY DO WE DO THIS? The answer is one of the most important biblical concepts that I believe few of us understand, and it starts in GARDEN.**
- **A&E chose to disobey God, at the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, their eyes were opened, and IMMEDIATELY THEY REALIZED they were naked, exposed, they felt shame, and they HID.**
- **BUT WHY? They hadn't done anything morally wrong, as we understand morality. They hadn't lied, stolen, been hurt or insulted, done that to another... aside from choice to disobey God, they were still innocent of any sin. WHY ASHAMED?**
- **THEIR SHAME WASN'T BECAUSE THEY SAW THEIR SIN, BUT BECAUSE THEY SAW THEIR SELF, THEY SAW WHAT THEY HAD LOST. Exposed, at their core, where before had dwelled the very life of God, they now saw the broken, needy, and SPIRITALLY DEAD HUMAN SELF.**
- **In GENESIS 5 "God created mankind in the likeness of GOD. Adam had a son in HIS likeness" And so this THIS EMPTY HUMAN SELF then became the FIRST IDENTITY of every human being. NT....**

† Our first identity, the identity of our FLESH

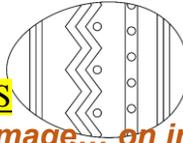
- **THINK OF EGG. Set it out on counter, after a week still looks okay, but inside, there's a problem. Good picture of who we are as people... DESCRIBE...**
 - **In our core, spiritually dead, separated from God**
 - **In our soul, we have mind, will, emotions- conscious self- this self is dominated by FLESH**
- **It has no life in itself, and thus it seeks to meet its own needs and establish its own identity through externals. It is prone to pride, shame, and self-protection because most of all it fears being exposed. It forces us into an identity based upon what we do, what is done to us, and always dependent on validation and affirmation from external forces we cannot control.**
- **Failure comes, damage occurs, and shame enters.**



– **We see this in Ephesians 2...**

Ephesians 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. ³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

- **By our nature- our first identity- we are spiritually dead, separated from God, and dominated by our flesh. This identity leads to SHAME. THIS LEADS TO creating our second identity...**



✚ Our second identity, the identity of **EXTERNALS**

- **Easter egg. Looks beautiful, decorated, image... on inside, who knows. Very possible EMPTY.**
- **Again, powerful image, as our nature is to hide what's inside, and seek to establish an identity by what's on the surface... EXTERNALS (blanks on outline)**
 - **Performance/success. Roles. Job/career. Talents. Humor/ Personality. Popularity. Image.. politics Groups/associations. \$\$/STUFF. Sports. Hobbies. Intellect. Education. Church/ christian service. Kids. Relationships. Rebellions. People pleasing..**
- **BUT... Many of these are good things! Why is this eternal identity still a problem?**
 - **It's fragile. Outside our control. Based on approval of others, and prone to the false beliefs we've covered thus far. MASK- defending and protecting itself, persona, FALSE SELF.**

– **REALITY. THIS FALSE SELF is the only option we have as long as our soul is dominated by that first human nature- our FLESH.**

- **AND THIS FRIENDS, IS WHERE THE FULLNESS OF GOSPEL BREAKS THROUGH!!! You see, Jesus didn't come just to save us from our sins, he came to set us free from that old, broken, human SELF. TO SAVE US FROM THE POWER OF OUR FLESH.**
- **Repeat: Because Christ died- sacrifice- and rose again- defeating death- IN CHRIST I'm no longer a SINNER in my identity, I also am set free from being a SELFER in my Identity.**
- **When we start to see this, we will find this message throughout the NT... powerful picture in.. listen to this through lens of our identity....**

Philippians 3:7-9 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith

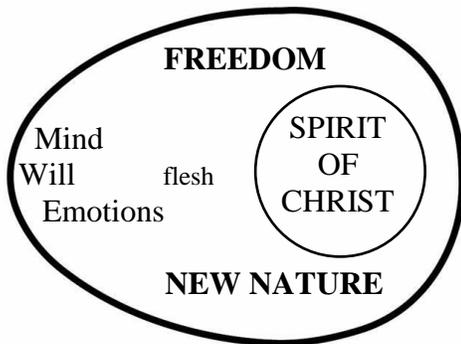
- **First identity: From Adam. Shame of our flesh**
- **Second identity: Manufactured, external, false self**

† GOSPEL! Our true identity, our New Nature in Christ

Matthew 16:24-26 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **(meaning what?)**²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life **(preserve external identity- hide shame)** will lose it, but whoever loses their life **(trusts God to let go of eternal identity, stop hiding, receive our rightness, fullness, identity in Christ)** for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world **(every external we could think of)**, yet forfeit their soul **(stay spiritually dead, empty inside)**? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? **GOOD NEWS! We have nothing we can give God to cure the condition of our flesh, we can only RECEIVE, by FAITH...**

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

– **Lets talk about the NEW that has come**



- **FIRST- In our core, our spirit, where we were dead, separated from God, we now are in UNION WITH GOD, indwelled by Christ. GLORIOUS RICHES OF MYSTERY...**
- **Second, in our SOUL, in our mind, will, emotions, conscious self, we now have the choice to experience our NEW NATURE- the work of the spirit- fruit of the spirit. Christ as source of strength, hope, contentment, peace... WHAT IS TRUE OF US IN CHRIST being foundation of our identity.**
- **Still have our flesh, but it is diminished, no longer dominates us, we have the choice to put it out of power.**
- **Where shame once dwelled, we are able to move toward freedom.**
- **AMAZING...**

STILL HAVE Positive externals no longer source of identity, rather expressed for God's Glory

- **Love outdoors. Gift, not identity**
- **Passionate about career. Gift, glorify God, but not source of who I am.**
- **Relationship, or long for relationship. Wonderful, but my fullness is in Christ, not another person.**

Negative externals **(performance, image, other)** lose role of identity, allowing us to release them to God

Romans 5:1-5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. **(into this new life, new heart, new identity)** And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. **(in face of suffering externals crumble)** ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

- **NEXT WEEK we complete content of book, and focus on reality of this NEW NATURE of Christ in us. DON'T MISS IT!**